DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 338 UD 028 188

AUTHOR Ascher, Carol
TITLE School Programs for African American Male Students. Trends and Issues No. 15.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE May 91
CONTRACT RI88062013
NOTE 46p.
AVAILABLE FROM ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Teachers College, Box 40, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027 ($8.00).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Education; Black Students; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Males; *School Community Relationship; *Urban Problems; *Urban Programs
IDENTIFIERS *African Americans

ABSTRACT

This monograph describes recently initiated or proposed school- and community-sponsored educational programs for African American male children and youth. The decline in the urban industrial economy, the departure of middle- and working-class African Americans from the inner cities, and the burgeoning African American birthrate have contributed to the development of a highly negative urban environment in which African American youth are deprived of models of a disciplined lifestyle and realistic hope for the future. Educational programs tailored specifically for African American males aim to inoculate youth against this hostile environment and to empower them as individuals and as community members. The programs share the following components: (1) male role models/male bonding; (2) identity/self-esteem; (3) academic values and social skills; (4) parent and community strengthening; (5) transition to manhood; and (6) a safe haven. Descriptions of 17 school-based and school-linked programs and five district and state proposals for school-based projects are included. Where possible, each description includes the following information: (1) the organizer's view of the problem to be solved; (2) a description of the community served; (3) the program components; (4) references; and (5) the name of a contact person. A list of 63 references is appended. (FMW)

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SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENTS

Carol Ascher
Teachers College, Columbia University

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Carol Ascher
Teachers College, Columbia University

Trends and Issues No. 15
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
May 1991

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Box 40, Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, New York 10027
212/678-3433

Director: Erwin Flaxman
Managing Editor: Wendy Schwartz

This publication was produced by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education, under contract number R188062013, and from Teachers College, Columbia University. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.

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SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

This monograph describes a number of recently initiated or proposed school- and community-sponsored educational programs for African American* male children and youth. Many of these programs are school-based; some are merely school-linked.

Educational programs tailored specifically to the needs of African American boys and youth are relatively new; they have been implemented largely as a grassroots response to the acute problems increasingly evident among those who are living in poor inner-city neighborhoods. In general, the aim of these programs is to inoculate African American youth against often hostile forces in their environment, and to empower them as individuals and as members of a community to proceed along paths to success.

Educators know all too well that they alone can't solve all the problems that effect African American communities: they can't rebuild the U.S. economy, rejuvenate impoverished ghettoes, or even restore poor, disorganized homes to health. The hope exists, however, that schools and school-related projects can at least attack those problems faced by African American males that clearly manifest themselves within the school. Many of these problems first appear early in the elementary years: high rates of truancy, suspensions, expulsions, and academic failure, as well as a highly disproportionate number of black male students in compensatory education and special education programs.

In fact, many educators believe that current school organization and practices may themselves contribute to the serious problems suffered by African American males as adults. They argue that schools with inadequate resources, racially biased management practices, and often unconsciously prejudiced teachers, all reinforce and even exacerbate the disadvantages of these students.

The motivation to make changes to benefit black male students is great, particularly in predominantly minority schools, but increasingly also in desegregated school districts with well-balanced school populations. In a society

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* The terms African American and black are used interchangeably here.

which will require a more skilled and better trained labor force, the negative effects of a poorly educated population go well beyond the handicaps faced by that group.

New programs and proposals to change how schools serve African American boys and youth are initiated almost every month. In fact, because of their newness—many are still just in the conceptualization stage—what little has been written about the programs has most often been in local news stories. Until now, there has been no directory or central listing of them.

This paper attempts to fill that void by providing a preliminary survey of the emerging programs for African American males. The programs included in this document have been identified informally, through word of mouth, newspaper articles, and other chance sources; and their descriptions derive largely from interviews with coordinators. Of course, at a time when programs and proposals for educating African American youth are just beginning, this listing cannot be exhaustive. It does, however, indicate the range of methods and approaches being tried around the country. References to news clippings, brochures, and other written sources of information have been supplied whenever possible, as have the names of individuals to contact. And this preliminary directory can provide a communication service by offering information on existing projects to other schools and districts initiating or considering programs, and to individuals contemplating relevant research. If it is truly successful, it will also encourage individuals to write or call the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education to report additional programs so that the listing can be kept current.

This document contains three major sections. **Growing Up African American Male** discusses the problems that inspired programs for this population. **School-Based and School-Linked Programs** describes a range of elementary and secondary school programs for African American boys and youth. Finally, **District and State Proposals for School-Based Projects** summarizes current proposals for solving the educational problems of black males.

GROWING UP AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE:
URBAN COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

By now it is hardly necessary to elaborate the precarious state of many young African American males in impoverished urban neighborhoods. In fact, the high rate of devastation among six percent of our country's population is not just a "black male crisis." As a recent Wingspread Conference report on improving the life chances and leadership opportunities of African American males points out, "There is talk about 'the browning' of America: by the year 2020, the majority of American population will be people of color" (Inroads/Wisconsin, 1990, p. 4). Thus the issues facing African American males also face our entire society, and they will continue to grow more complex.

Along with the decline in our urban industrial economy and the removal of many unskilled jobs from the cities, one of the most important demographic shifts has been the decrease of middle- and working-class black families in urban neighborhoods. This has deprived many remaining families in minority neighborhoods of contact with regularly employed individuals, of job networks, and of other middle-class resources—in short, models of a disciplined lifestyle and realistic hope (Wilson, 1987). Obviously, the social isolation of such high-poverty neighborhoods generates a number of its own problems: drug abuse, domestic violence, health problems, suicide, a disproportionate number of arrests among African American male youth, and, consequently, increasingly high incidence of incarceration.

Another demographic shift associated with the dislocation of high poverty inner-city neighborhoods has been the disproportionate number of young people in these areas, caused partly by in-migration and partly by higher birth rates in poor neighborhoods than in middle-class areas. The preponderance of young adult males, among whom only a small percentage are employed—34 percent of all black males ages 18-19 in 1984 (Wilson, 1987)—sets off its own chain of crime, addiction, and welfare dependency. In 1986, about a quarter of all black high school dropouts between 25 and 35 were in jail—and, not surprisingly,

employment possibilities deteriorate for men with criminal records (Ferguson, 1990).

This is the configuration of personal and public tragedy that has prompted a national alarm. As Marable (1990) has argued, there is simultaneously an internal and an external crisis in the black community. The internal crisis is in the African American family, neighborhood, community, and cultural institutions. The external crisis results from the deterioration of skilled and higher paying jobs within, and accessible to, the ghetto; the decline in public support for housing, health care, education, and related social services for low-to-moderate income people; and the increasing reliance on prisons and other coercive methods for "regulating" the black male population.

The Community

"To be young and black in the urban areas of the United States is to be subjected to all the harshest elements of oppression at the most vulnerable period of one's life," wrote Robert Staples (1982, p. 22) in one of the first books on the fate of "black masculinity" in this era. For Staples, no understanding of the experience of the African American male is possible without a complex analysis of the problems of poverty and discrimination linked to being black and being male, both in childhood and in adulthood.

Between 1960 and 1985, the proportion of African American families headed by a woman increased from 22 to 44 percent. According to best estimates, by the mid-1980s, 86 percent of all black children were likely to spend some time in a single parent household, usually a mother-only family (Jaynes & Williams, 1989). The number of African American male children raised by their mothers can only have grown since then. As a report from Atlanta notes,

> Half of these children [serviced by Morehouse College's Community Service Projects] have never visited their father's home. More than forty percent do not see their father at all in a typical year. Only one in five sleeps in a father's home in a typical month. In short, more and more of these children simply do not know what it means to have a father (Prince, 1990, p. 3).

Although there is some disagreement about whether the enormous increase in African American households headed by single mothers can be attributed to the rise in black male underemployment and unemployment, it is

commonly agreed that joblessness among black men has been a deterrent to marriage (Edelman, 1987; Ellwood & Rodda, 1991). Within the last ten years, there has been a 15 percent decline in labor force participation among African American men (Inroads/Wisconsin, 1990). At the same time, the growth in African American households headed by single woman, many of whom are teenagers and themselves low wage earners at best, has precipitated the serious and long-term poverty in which black males often spend most of their childhood. While about half of all black female-headed families were poor in the early 1980s, over 85 percent of all black female-headed families where the woman was under 25 were poor (Wilson, 1987; Edelman, 1987). Moreover, poverty in these African American, female headed families tends to be more severe and longer lasting than it is among white families. While white children in one recent survey were poor on an average of less than a year during their first 15 years, black children were poor 5.4 years of this same period (Orland, 1989). Given the current jobless rates among blacks in the early 1990s, these statistics are likely to grow more severe.

Family poverty and unemployment are not good conditions for any child's development. But growing up in a female-headed household, in which the men who are tangentially related have illegal and dangerous lifestyles, may be especially deleterious to the development of male children. Although in low-income neighborhoods African American men are likely to be present to act as models for male children, high unemployment often forces these men into the alternative economies. Thus, while many are employed irregularly or not at all, others are making money selling drugs or engaging in other risky and illegal work.

The dearth of African American men—who act as steady fathers, uncles, or friends to boys in inner-city neighborhoods, and who, by their own lives, would show that responsible, legitimate adult behavior makes sense—contributes to the difficulty black male children have in proceeding successfully through school and moving into steady and remunerative jobs. Thus, Wilson (1987), among others, has argued that jobs for adult males would be the most reasonable and effective public policy intervention. At the same time, others, with more entrepreneurial ideologies, have argued for "economic empowerment" for creating business and other economic opportunities that allow African American men to help themselves.

The School

However great an improvement new inner-city jobs and businesses might make in the lives of African American youth, they would still face other obstacles. There is the shameful inadequacy of many urban public schools in predominantly minority neighborhoods, and the incontrovertible fact that African Americans are too often not given educational preparation for adult life as good as that received by whites.

As African Americans have become a largely urban population, inner-city schools have become increasingly nonwhite. By 1986-87, about a fifth of the large urban school districts nationally had three-quarters or more of their black students in intensely segregated (90-100 percent) schools. And schools in New York City, Newark, Chicago, and Detroit were all around 90 percent nonwhite (Orfield & Monford, 1988). Further, schools serving predominantly black and Hispanic students are also likely to serve disproportionate numbers of poor children—and poverty concentration itself has been demonstrated to have a depressive effect on achievement (Orland, 1989). Finally, schools in poor nonwhite neighborhoods tend to have more poorly prepared and less experienced teachers; fewer higher level mathematics, science, and language courses; and a lack of computers, laboratory and other equipment, compared to schools serving predominantly white middle-class students (Oakes, 1985). The dire implications of inadequate staffing, for example, are made clear in a recent study by Ferguson (1990), which suggests that, while teachers' literacy skills are one of the two most important predictors of students' reading and math scores (parental education is the other), teachers' skills account for an even larger share of black students' scores than they do whites'.

In both predominantly minority and legally desegregated schools, school management practices such as homogeneous groupings, tracking, and disciplinary practices tend systematically to constrict, rather than expand, black youth's life chances (Oakes, 1985). African American male students are more likely than other students to be suspended and expelled (Bennett & Harris, 1982). They receive twice as much corporal punishment as do other students. They are disproportionately placed in special education classes and significantly underrepresented in programs for the gifted and talented. Finally, a third of all

African American students take general, rather than academic or vocational courses in high school (Lomotey, 1990; Oakes, 1985).

Inside the classroom, African American students are disproportionately taught by didactic teaching techniques aimed at the acquisition of lower level cognitive skills, rather being encouraged to engage in the kinds of reading, writing, and problem-solving activities that promote the acquisition of higher order thinking and inspire a zest for learning (The College Board, 1985). Like all students faced with a fragmented, rote, and "measurement-driven" curriculum, African American students in the lower tracks misbehave more in classes, have higher dropout rates, and are more delinquent outside of school (Oakes, 1985).

Finally, as numerous educators and scholars have begun to point out, the curriculum content available in most schools simply fails to foster African American students' confidence in their own intellectual possibilities.

> Facts that would allow African Americans to overcome the fear that theirs is an inferior gene pool are still largely missing from school curriculums. Many blacks report that their confidence in the race and in themselves rose noticeably when they learned that empires existed in Africa before the coming of Europeans, that black Africans were important in ancient civilizations, and that African Americans in the U.S. have been leaders in fields (e.g. science) other than sports, entertainment, and politics. But the percentage of our society that has been exposed to these facts remains small (Ferguson & Jackson, 1990, p.12).

Not surprisingly, the difficulty that African American students, and particularly African American males, have faced in attaining a high quality education has had its psychological ramifications. As Ogbu argues, the fact that black school relations are "riddled with conflicts and suspicion make it difficult for blacks to internalize the schools' goals, standards, and teaching and learning approaches" (1986, p.49). The general difficulty African American male students have in doing well in school is attributed to a "cool pose" by Majors (1990), and to a complicated self-imposed "anti-achievement ethic" caused by a resistance to "racelessness" or "acting white" by Fordham & Ogbu (1986). According to Fordham and Ogbu, the refusal of whites over the years to acknowledge black intellectual ability has led to self-doubt among blacks and a sense that academic achievement is the province of whites; this, in turn, generated peer pressure that discourages black students from "acting white." As Ferguson and Jackson argue, "many black youths consider themselves to be asserting their blackness by rejecting

the value that whites (and blacks who supposedly want to emulate whites) place on academic achievement" (1990, p.11).

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The warning that black men are an "endangered species" (Gibbs, 1988) has become a rallying cry for a number of public sector intervention programs and private initiatives around the country. These programs aim to break the cycle of black male unemployment, poverty, violence and illegal behavior, irresponsible fathering, and psychological despair by changing the ways in which African American males receive schooling, are socialized into manhood, spend their free time or find jobs, and see themselves and their life chances. Those that are community-based have been created by social service agencies, churches, and private, professional and philanthropic groups, and may be offered in their own facilities or in public schools.

In line with the individualistic approaches of the past decade, these programs do not attempt to create structural changes in the economy or in the power relations of our country; instead, they seek to make changes in individuals and in narrowly defined communities of youth. The nonschool approaches most often focus on helping a small, select group of African American males to raise their school achievement, end their drug and gang participation, improve their sexual responsibility, or increase their chances of employment through job training. Often all four goals are part of the same program. Efforts to meet them are multiple, with somewhat varied emphases. Some programs offer mentors, role models, peer groups, advocates, new friends and reference groups, at the same time as they teach academic, social, and job skills. Others use cultural nationalism as a means to build youths' self-esteem, a feeling of control over their lives, and a greater respect for their race (Ferguson, 1990; Parker, 1989; Mincy & Wiener, 1990). In general, strategies include offering both resources (information, culture and history, actual contacts) and emotional connections, in order to replace the behavior and values of the street with those of respect, community responsibility, discipline, and self-development (G. Mendez, personal communication, April 1991).

School Programs

Among educators, as well as other professionals who work with the schools, there have also been a number of recommendations about how directly to ameliorate the educational conditions of African American male children and youth, thus also stemming the larger problems these students will face later. One group of recommendations has focused on very general educational equity issues, which would improve the overall educational opportunities of all disadvantaged students. These include eliminating discrepancies in educational financing between schools in well-to-do and poor neighborhoods, implementing heterogeneous ability grouping, and improving the recruitment and training of teachers and counselors in predominantly black schools (Gibbs, 1988; Parkham & McDavis, 1987; Reed, 1988).

Another group of recommendations has concentrated on changes that are much more narrowly tailored to the perceived needs of African American students, particularly males. As Ghee (1990) argues, these programs aim to create two major shifts in the students' values: the first is the shift from being "cool" to being "righteous"; the second is the shift from a focus on "success" to a focus on "responsibility" for oneself and one's family, community, people, and country. The methods for creating these two shifts include using special teaching methods that are both harmonious with the learning styles of African American children and help to develop cultural awareness (Ghee, 1990; Hale-Benston, 1986; Kunjufu, 1984); using school counselors to help young African American males improve their self-concept and explore career options, and to train African American parents how to respond to their male children (Parkham & McDavis, 1987); creating a rich environment that helps redefine what is male through the use of African American male teachers, all-male classes, special Afrocentric initiation rites, and an emphasis on the qualities of great African American leaders (Kunjufu, 1984). Probably the most extreme and comprehensive proposal, in that it both isolates the targeted students and creates special programming for them, has been to create a National Youth Academy with 50 campuses on the country's unused, inactive military bases. A mix of prep school, Job Corps, Civilian Conservation Camp, and penal institution, the program would "provide the

academic, moral and social development" needed for its students to become "independent, responsible and productive citizens" (Proctor, 1987, p. 12).

School-based programs also differ in the age group on which they focus. Some, following research showing that African American males begin to slide academically some time before the third or fourth grade (Kunjufu, 1986; Lloyd, 1978), are aimed at boys in the early elementary years. These usually enhance the regular curriculum with Afrocentric materials and often add the psychological support of an all-male class, an African American male teacher and other men in various resource capacities. Other school programs respond to research suggesting that adolescence for youth of all races is a particularly precarious period, a time when the young man dons "a breastplate of ominipotence" that makes him particularly vulnerable to risk-taking behavior (Poinsett, 1988). Among African American youth, this risk-taking behavior too often results early fathering, drug use, dropping out of school, acts of violence, and incarceration, and so the programs may be geared directly or indirectly to countering these specific problems through creating an alternate set of activities, behaviors and values.

The Characteristics of the Programs

The school-based and school-linked programs described in the following sections vary significantly; their main unity is the goal of creating specific treatments for African American male children and youth. While the common assumption is that these programs all create special classes or sessions for African American male children, led by an African American male teacher, who offers a curriculum enriched by Afrocentric materials, in fact, the reality is much more complex. Some programs are for male students only, some are not. Some are for African Americans only, some are not. Some are full-day programs, others are only a class, or even take place for an hour beyond the school day and/or on Saturday. Finally, some attempt to transform the entire academic curriculum for the black students, while others simply add a component on African American culture, and still others attempt to enrich the curriculum for other, non-black students with Afrocentric materials. Discipline, social skills (including conflict management), mastery learning, and other curricula that promote success, as well as parent involvement, are all frequent components.

District-based projects—these are still generally in the planning stage—often include special schools, sessions, or classes with some or all of the above components, but also aim to effect the distribution of funds and resources throughout the district.

What is new about these programs? To help clarify their contribution, it is useful to compare them to multicultural programs, which are now quite common around the country as a concept if not in fact. Multicultural programs aim to rectify a Eurocentric curriculum and reduce intergroup conflict by infusing an awareness of cultural diversity. By contrast, an Afrocentric curriculum also aims to include a people and history that is often left out of the traditional curriculum, at the same time as Afrocentrism offers a set of values based on humanism, nonmaterialism, and community cohesion. However, the reduction of intergroup conflict plays a secondary role. In any case, what distinguishes the emerging programs for African American males covered here is the simultaneous use of cultural and male identity supports.

While the hoped-for effect of cultural and gender identity supports is obviously beyond the sum of the parts, it may be useful to consider the underlying premises of these new program components.

Male Role Models/Male Bonding. First, the presupposition is that African American students suffer from the lack of appropriate male models. Most teachers are women—80 percent of all elementary teachers are female. However good these teachers may be, the argument is that they cannot compensate for the dearth of strong, positive male figures in the children's homes and neighborhoods. Thus, in providing African American male teachers, as well as bringing in other successful African American men from the community, the programs attempt to offer new positive images of African American male adulthood, and to create support for moving out of the cool culture into more functional behavior patterns. At the same time, the programs attempt to help African American male students bond with each other, and with adult males, in deeper, more positive ways.

Identity/Self-Esteem. The assumption is that African American male students in inner-city neighborhoods are often battered by the pervasive negative images of blacks on the streets, in the schools, and in the media—all of which have a negative influence on their racial and gender identity, as well as on their self-esteem. Because exposure to such images can cause teachers to doubt their

African American male students' chances for success, the first step is often the careful selection or retraining of teachers for these programs. Next, the programs attempt to create a "consciousness-raising" curriculum that focuses on the bicontinental history of African Americans, and what this group, particularly its males, has contributed to a democratic, scientific, and artistic heritage. As Marable elaborates:

> If the curriculum of our public schools does not present the heritage, culture and history of African-Americans, if it ignores or downgrades our vital contributions to a more democratic society, our children are robbed of their heritage. They acquire a distorted perspective about themselves and their communities. If they believe that African-American people have never achieved greatness, in the sciences, art, music, economics and the law, how can they excel or achieve for themselves? (Marable, 1990, p. 19).

Academic Values and Social Skills. Because the culture of the "cool pose" and the fear of "acting white" are thought to be inimical to academic achievement, the programs attempt to focus directly on alternative values and social skills. Thus they try to develop respect, dignity, even "gentlemen's graces" (such as asking the students to rise whenever the male teacher enters); enforce strict attendance rules; strive to create an interest in and respect for learning; help students with conflict resolution; and develop responsible sexual norms. Some programs even have uniforms—they can be as simple as standard t-shirts—to create a sense of both discipline and solidarity. The goal is to instill new behaviors that will lead to greater ease with, and respect from, adults both in school and in the work world.

Parent and Community Strengthening. The programs often focus on African American males who are from fragmented and stressed families. They assume that these boys and youth must become responsible to their homes and communities, at the same time as their parents and communities must be brought in to help with their development. Thus, many programs have a community service component, almost all try to bring male community members into the classroom as mentors and in other roles, and most demand that parents (generally mothers) commit themselves to some form of participation.

Transition to Manhood. Possibly the most innovative aspect of these programs is their use of "initiation rites" or "rites of passage" as a way of smoothing and dignifying the transition from boyhood to manhood. These rites are offered as alternative structures to gang participation, which many sociologists

have identified as a spontaneous form of initiation rite. Although not always explicit, the assumption behind these planned rites is that, in fatherless homes, the transition to manhood is particularly precarious, and that formal rituals are necessary to keep African American males on a safe course. As Hill puts it, "The African-American male's lifelines to masculinity are systematically severed. Nobody ever officially tells him when he has attained manhood...There is no ceremony, or ritual even, as in ancient Africa or Bar Mitzvah, to usher the African-American male into proper manhood" (Down the "rite" road, 1990, p. 27). The initiation rites programs generally occur over a year, and often include acquiring new knowledge, learning rules of conduct, keeping a journal, creating a genealogical chart of the boy's immediate and extended family, providing service to the community, and, finally, participating in a special ceremony. More than other program components, initiation rites are generally offered outside school hours, or even off the school campus—although there are exceptions to this generalization. In any case, since public school curricula have traditionally not included any such activities, outside consultants or even packaged programs are often used to guide the initiation rites.

A Safe Haven. Finally, and underlying all the other components, is the conviction that many low-income African American boys and youth need an environment that shelters them, and even contravenes their subculture. At the same time, their families and other community members need strengthening if they are to help these youth move in a positive direction. Thus the programs often protect students from the street by extending the school day and adding a Saturday component, both of which provide tutorial, recreational, and other programs that offer healthy, alternative models for male values and behavior.

ALL BLACK AND ALL MALE? SOME CONCERNS

Of all the program components, the prospect of all-African American, all-male classrooms, has been most controversial. They have been called "an abandonment of any hope, faith, or determination to force change upon the public system" (NAACP, 1991). Although *de facto* segregated schools and classes are commonplace in every city, the intentional creation of a race-segregated school or class violates existing federal civil rights laws. As the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund has argued, introducing race-based segregation is a 180-degree

change in direction for social and educational policy, and one with extremely high risks.

> It would legitimate the very mechanism that was used so effectively to hinder and disadvantage generations of African Americans. Once established, it would hand over a powerful tool to those who may not have the best interests of African-American children at heart and will be difficult, if not impossible, to control or undo. It also undermines efforts to eliminate segregation of African-American males in special education classes and separate schools and classes for disciplinary problems—both practices that have been proved to be harmful to African-American pupils (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 1991, p. 2).

In fact, a number of programs, even in predominantly minority neighborhoods, are creating enrollment alternatives to circumvent the moral and legal problems of (re)segregation. For example, a half-day program for African American males was passed by the Minneapolis Board of Education in January 1991, which sought to avoid controversies and illegalities centering around intentionally fostering segregation. And desegregated schools with special programs for African American males tend to use pull-out programs, taking students from their regular classes for only part of the school day, as a way of avoiding the illegality of an all-black classroom. (Unfortunately, pull-outs may not be the best model to imitate: in Chapter 1, ESEA Programs, pull-outs were found to stigmatize students, precipitate resegregation, and cause fragmentation of the curriculum [Ascher, 1987]. In the context of programs for African American males, these pull-out programs may also have the disadvantage of not creating the complete educational environment necessary to success.) Finally, the fear has been voiced that "these schools will further marginalize African American males by . . . failing to prepare them for meaningful roles in a pluralistic society . . ." (National Urban League, 1991). In response to such criticisms, programs such as the proposed Ujamaa Institute in New York have gradually shifted from being all-male and all-African American to offering open admissions to everyone interested in an African-centered curriculum, with a special focus on African American males (B. Mchawi, personal communication, April 1991).

Not surprisingly, a second, and parallel criticism has been that of sex segregation. According to Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1972, sex segregated classes and schools are illegal in public education. Title IX was the legal reason invoked by the Office of Civil Rights in closing an all-African American male class at Pine Villa Elementary School in Miami, and

the possibility of legal difficulties stemming from Title IX has made proposed programs like the Ujamaa Institute open their doors to female students. At the same time, a number of moral and pedagogical arguments have also been made against the all-male classes. For example, African American girls are said to need an Afrocentric curriculum, male teachers, and other enhancements as much as their brothers (NAACP, 1991); these all-male classes are said to be perpetuating "the myth that black women are succeeding at the expense of black men" (Gifford, 1990, p. 9); and it is argued that some of the critical lessons black males need to learn to negotiate their society are best made with females in the class (Inroads/Wisconsin, 1990). Finally, there has been a fear that the new special programs for African American males may reinforce outdated authoritarian values and even indulge in a kind of "black woman-bashing." As Omolade (1991, p. 102), who generally supports the concept, asks, "Can [the programs] be masculine without being macho, manly without being sexist and anti-female?"

Because of the legal problems of implementing all-male African American classes in the public schools, a number of programs are being linked to the schools, but run by other institutions; for example, Inroads/Wisconsin's Youth Leadership Academy works with Milwaukee Public School system, the East End Neighborhood House project works with two East Cleveland public schools, and the Greater Tampa Urban League's Children of the Sun Program is connected to the Tampa Public Schools.

The school programs for African American males focus on building a learning environment structured by gender, racial, and cultural features. Although new teaching methods and special curriculum are often included, these too are generally described by their cultural style and content. As the National Urban League (1991) has pointed out, these approaches must be judged against a broader array of variables that constitute good education.

> These variables include higher order academic competencies, effective mechanisms for meaningful parental involvement, student assessment tied to improved student performance, school and teacher accountability, and effective guidance services to aid students and their parents in planning for future careers and higher education . . . Anything less would lead to further marginalization and alienation of the African American male not only from the educational process, but from the society as a whole (National Urban League, 1991).

It is too early to know the efficacy of these approaches. Like the non-school programs, the school-based programs are all relatively new. There is little systematic research on their results, and certainly no longitudinal analysis of how they affect the life chances of African American youth. Important questions remain unanswered. How different from regular classes, and how much more effective, is the curriculum in these programs? Can the programs overwhelm the contrary, incredibly strong influences of inner-city life? Will the interventions be useful over the short- and long-run? and, What aspect or aspects of the programs will be most salient? Because most programs involve several simultaneous interventions, the salient components will not be easy to tease out. Finally, school programs for African American males are emerging in schools and communities that are already embattled, and financial as well as legal constraints are changing, and often narrowing, the contours of the programs even before they begin.

SCHOOL-BASED AND SCHOOL-LINKED PROGRAMS

This section is divided into three parts: 1) programs serving elementary students; 2) programs for secondary school youth; and 3) privately-sponsored programs geared to serving either public or private schools.

Where possible, the following information is provided for each program: the organizer's view of the problem or problems to be solved by the intervention; a brief description of the community served; the program components; references; and the name(s) of the program contact.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

East End Neighborhood House and the East Cleveland Public Schools

Paul Hill
East End Neighborhood House
Cleveland, OH
216/791-9378

Connie Calloway
Director of Research
East Cleveland Public Schools
Cleveland, OH
216/268-6596

Cleveland is home to the second largest African American population in the United States, and East Cleveland is 98 percent African American. About thirty percent of the families are on public assistance.

With funding from the Cleveland Foundation, the East End Neighborhood House is conducting an Afrocentric rites of passage program with African American students in two East Cleveland public schools: 25 male and 25 female fifth and sixth graders in the Focus/Scope Primary Magnet School, and 25 male and 25 female seventh and eighth graders in Kirk Middle School. The students are referred by the school to the program and are representative of those in the community: some are above average students, some are average, and some are not doing well. Some parental involvement is a requirement for participation.

The program takes place two afternoons a week, after school (special busing is provided by the Foundation), as well from 9-12 on Saturday. It lasts between one and three years. A Summer Leadership Institute is also conducted every July.

The program is based on principles instilled through the use of the Nguzo Saba (Seven Principles) taken from the Kwanzaa African American cultural program. Its goals include: legitimizing being African American; offering a sense of family and history; providing spiritual values and a code for behavior and problem solving; developing an understanding of the male and female roles; helping students move beyond their community while using its behavior code. The program separates the students by gender for most activities, under the assumption that the "two halves are being prepared in order to create a whole," but brings the girls and boys together for field trips and other special events. As with most rites programs, this one also offers a structured process of "separation," "transition," and "reintegration." A rites ceremony with family and friends is held at the end of each school year.

The program is currently being evaluated by John Carroll University School of Psychology.

Bernstein, M. (1990, December 15). Blacks resurrect rites of passage: African-inspired ritual seen as boon to youth. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, D-1, ff.

Down the 'rite' road. (1990, November 15). *Leadership News*, p.1 ff.

Hill, P. (1987). *Simba: Coming of age for the African-American Male.* (ED 287 923) See also ED 287 924 and ED 287 966.

Fulton Academics and Athletics Magnet - San Diego City Schools

Carol Pike, Principal
Fulton Academics and Athletics Magnet
San Diego City Schools
619/262-0777

Located in an upwardly mobile, lower-middle-class residential area of single family homes, where English is the dominant language, Fulton enrolls 700 students in K-6. Considered a "minority isolated school," about half the students are African American, 25 percent are white, and the rest are a mixture of Hispanic, Asian, and Native American. Since 1989, the school has been one of four in the San Diego system involved in a special three-year pilot project to improve the generally poor district statistics on African American male suspensions, grade point averages, and dropout rates.

Fulton Academics and Athletics has a full-time African American male pupil advocate who meets weekly with the school's African American males by classroom groups, both in and outside their regular classes. All 175 African American males in K-6 (whether or not they are at risk) are involved in the program. The pull-out and in-classroom sessions offer training in social skills, as well as a curriculum on African American culture and the place of African Americans in American society. The program also provides positive role models, mentors, individual and group counseling, tutorial services, and a support network of African American males. Finally, staff development at the school focuses on

providing teachers with information on learning styles and other issues that enhance the development of the African American male student.

Pike, C.L. (1990). *Fulton Academics and Athletics Magnet School, San Diego City Schools: An effective elementary school model with special emphasis on the pilot project, "Improving the Achievement of African American Males."* Paper presented at the National Conference on Educating Black Children, Los Angeles, June 2.

Helping Hands - Wake County Public Schools
Raleigh, NC

Robert Bridges, Provost
St. Augustine College
Raleigh, NC

James Hargett, Project Director
Helping Hands
919/850-1660

Helping Hands was initiated in 1988 by Robert Bridges, then Superintendent of the Wake County Public Schools. Based on his analysis of black male achievement in the county, as well as on interviews with incarcerated African American males, Bridges posited several negative factors at work as the black male child struggled to become an adult: the absence of a sturdy, contributing male parent; perplexing relationships with females; alienation in the school setting; and hampered development of skills in the home, school, and community settings.

Initially privately funded, Helping Hands is now largely funded by the Wake County Public Schools. The program pairs black male educators (including teachers, counselors, and administrators) with 11- and 12-year-old black male students. For a $1,000 annual supplement, each of these educators acts as a "personal role model" for the eight to ten students, spending at least 20 after-school hours a month with them. The "personal models" begin the year by home visits, after which activities are structured around the students' academic and other needs.

Recently, Helping Hands has also initiated a community models program. This begins in the second year, and provides the students with 12 hours monthly of one-to-one contact with a community individual. In addition to the benefits of role modeling, program participants assert that "when people know a child has an advocate, they react to the child differently. They tend to focus more on that child and offer support" (Helping Hands, 1988).

A three-year evaluation has shown improvements in attendance and suspension rates, as well as in the students' behavior and core grades.

Bridges, R.E. (1988, April 30). Low scores for black male stem from identity crisis. *Leadership News*, p. 5.

Bridges, R.E. (1986, October). *Black male child development: A broken model.* Paper presented to the National Black Child Development Institute, Miami, October 8-10.

Helping Hands: New program gives black youths unique help for success in school. (1988, May). *Insight.* Raleigh, NC: Wake County Public School System.

Wake County Public Schools. (1988). *School/community helping hands project.* Raleigh, NC: Author.

Inroads/Wisconsin Youth Leadership Academy - Milwaukee Public Schools

Debra A. Kenner
Inroads/Wisconsin, Inc.
231 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 903
Milwaukee, WI 53203
414/272-1680

Inroads Youth Leadership Academy is an attempt by Inroads/Wisconsin to help develop young African American males into productive, contributing members of the corporate world—at best, to prepare them for corporate leadership. It works with black male third, fourth, and fifth grade students to improve their self-concept and decision-making skills.

Initially piloted in three Milwaukee elementary schools, since 1990 the Inroads/Wisconsin Youth Leadership Academy has drawn students from all the inner-city Milwaukee elementary schools. Although the program is voluntary, children often are recommended by their school principals. Parents are expected to support their children's involvement through attendance at regularly scheduled parent seminars and meetings, as well as through regular interactions with both public school and Inroads personnel.

Afterschool and Saturday classes are offered at both the Inroads office and Marquette University. "The curriculum is systematic and sequential, and is designed to build both academic and personal skills in a experiential format" (Inroads/Wisconsin 1990). All Inroads faculty members are black males; some are also employed in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

An initial three-year evaluation of Inroads participants suggest that the Academy is having a positive impact on their self-esteem. In addition, principals' and teachers' observations suggest improved behavior (Inroads/Wisconsin, 1990).

Inroads/Wisconsin. (1990). *Investing in our nation - a link to economic prosperity: The African American male.* Inroads/Wisconsin Youth Leadership Academy: A Status Report. Milwaukee: Author.

Mathew A. Hensen Elementary School - All Male Class
Baltimore, MD

Leah Hasty, Principal
Mathew A. Henson Elementary School, #29
Baltimore, MD
301/396-0776

The all-male class at Mathew A. Hensen Elementary School was started for second graders by its principal, Leah Hasty, in 1989. This same group of boys, now in the third grade, continues in a single class and will probably be kept together through the fourth grade. According to Hasty, the class was established to treat the main problems the boys face: low self-esteem and a lack of good role models. "Even their big brothers and cousins are likely to be dropouts, and drug use and crime in our neighborhood is high."

The all-male class is given the same curriculum as other classes in the school although it is supplemented in several ways. Three professional men from Omega Psi Phi, a black fraternity, come twice a month to work on self-esteem with the boys, and on alternate weeks young undergraduates from the same fraternity conduct a reading competition program. There are special "class mothers," and mothers come to meetings to learn about how to work with their children. The students are also beginning a buddy relationship, which will include pen pals, visits, and sports events with boys from a local all-male private school, Gilman.

In the first year of the program, the boys exceeded city-wide expectations for growth, although prior to the program many had had losses or minimal gains. Parents have also become more involved. "The classroom unit is very good for these women. They feel freer to talk than in a big PTA" (L. Hasty, personal communication, December 1990).

Monnier Elementary School - SAVE A STAR Male Leadership Development
Preventative Drop Out Program
Detroit, MI

Omelia T. Shaw, Principal
Monnier Elementary School
13600 Ward Street
Detroit, MI 48227
313/270-0071

The Monnier School SAVE A STAR program began in January 1987 in response to the alarming number of males in grades 3-5 who were being referred to the administration for disciplinary action, and who consequently were often excluded from classes and suspended from school.

Male students whose citizenship and academic achievement are below average and who show signs of being potential dropouts begin meeting with a male physical education teacher, a female counselor, and a female social worker

once a week. Meetings involve activities to develop the boy's African American identity, help them learn conflict resolution, improve their self-esteem, build internal motivation for behavior and academic success, and develop goals. Several times a month, students are also exposed to male role models "who beat the odds." In addition, Monnier staff voluntarily tutor these boys in reading, mathematics, spelling, science, computer math, and citizenship afterschool from 3-4 on Monday through Thursday. Finally, parents are provided with information and training to assist them in more effective rearing of their sons.

The results of the program have already been impressive. Since January 1988, no males have been suspended from Monnier School. There has also been a decrease in males referred to the office for disciplinary action, the grade point average of boys in the program improved to "C" or better in language arts and math, and male students have shown "an improved attitude about the meaning and purpose of school" (O. Shaw, personal communication, 1991).

Pine Villa Elementary School - At Risk Male Class
Miami, FL

Willie J. Wright
North Glade Elementary School
Dade County Public Schools
305/624-3608

The assumption behind the all-male classes at Pine Villa Elementary was that "try as they may, and as well meaning as they are, women cannot teach black boys to be men," and that many of the school problems black youth experience begin before the third grade. The students at Pine Villa are all black, and generally from very low-income, female-headed families, with a large proportion on federal subsidies and welfare.

Thus, in the 1987-88 school year, Willie J. Wright, then principal of Pine Villa Elementary, implemented two all-male classrooms, one in kindergarten and the other in the first grade. The only criterion for inclusion in the classes was that the students be from female-headed households.

The program focused on five areas: attendance, academic achievement, dyads (or buddies), gentlemen's social graces, and appropriate behavior for school life. The 20 black male kindergartners were given a black male teacher, while the 23 black male first graders were given a white male teacher. Students were paired in a buddy system, becoming their "brothers' keepers." Partners exchanged phone numbers and home addresses, and were required to have one phone call or visit weekly with each other—a demand which often got the mothers talking to each other and to the school. In addition, several successful African American males were recruited to act as volunteer teacher aides, giving a range of time from a 30-minute lunch hour to four hours a day. Although the classrooms offered no special academic curriculum, there were a number of "male bonding" activities, and male roles were stressed.

The results of the program were far beyond Wright's expectations. Eighteen of the 20 kindergartners, and 22 of the 23 first graders had perfect attendance. In standardized test scores, the black male kindergarten class scored 7-11 percent higher than their co-educational peers, while the black male first grade class scored 4-7 percent higher than their coeducational peers. Lessons in gentlemen's social graces and appropriate behavior, taught and rehearsed daily, led to significant changes in students' ways of dealing with confrontation.

The program was discontinued in the 1988-89 school year when the regional office of the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights judged it to be in violation of Title IX.

Rasberry, W. (1989, September 21). Dade educator proved the case for male teachers in all boys classes. *The Miami Times*, p. 5a.

Wright, W.J. (n.d.) *The at risk endangered species: The black male child.* Unpublished manuscript. Miami: Dade County Public Schools.

Morehouse College's Community Service Projects at Oglethorpe and Dean Rusk Elementary Schools Atlanta, GA

Thomas T. Prince
Counseling Center
Morehouse College
Atlanta, GA
404/681-2800

In an attempt to improve the life chances of African American male children living in Atlanta's public housing, Morehouse College, with its all-male population, initiated several in-school, as well as community-based, programs to serve at-risk youth. The school-based programs include both a mentoring component and an afterschool project, both at Oglethorpe and Dean Rusk Elementary Schools. The latter had the lowest standardized test scores in the Atlanta Public School System.

In the mentoring program, approximately 300 Morehouse students pair up with 300 fourth and fifth graders in the two elementary schools. The mentors meet their mentees for at least an hour a week at the elementary school. There, they may help the boy with his assignment, participate in his classroom, or even run a class based on Kunjufu's SETCLAE (Self-Esteem through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence) curriculum. In addition, mentees are brought to Morehouse for periodic social and cultural events.

The afterschool program was developed to fill a void noticed by Morehouse mentors: the boys often did not have anyone to help them with their daily homework or to review the school day's lessons. Thus, working closely with teachers, Morehouse students established a daily session that lasts approximately an hour an a half: for 45 minutes, children's lessons are reviewed and they are

helped with their homework; the remaining time is spent on fundamental math and reading problems.

In addition to these two school-based programs, for the past 20 years the Morehouse student government has been running the Frederick Douglass Tutorial Institute, which currently tutors more than 95 K-12 students from all over the city on Saturday mornings.

Prince, T. J. (1990). *Community service projects at Morehouse College targeted at youth at-risk.* Draft summaries. Atlanta: Morehouse College Counseling Center.

Woodward Elementary School Cadet Program
Detroit, MI

Clifford Watson
Woodward Elementary School
2900 Wreford
Detroit, MI 48208
313/494-2501

Woodward Elementary draws students from one of the poorest neighborhoods in Detroit. Its Cadet Program, begun in the fall of 1987, focuses on third to fifth grade boys. Of the 25-30 who are involved each year, some have severe discipline problems, while others are doing well academically and socially.

The Cadet Program uses fifth grade boys to tutor and mentor the third graders. The groups get together once a week to work in computer technology. Student mentors also draw up contracts with mentees in any academic or social area where there is a problem.

Parents are involved through "operation homework" and field trips, and some parents are also involved in a special training program in parenting.

At the same time, the fifth graders engage in a year-long rite of passage, following Ron Johnson and Nathan Hare's ten-point principles. The requirements for this rite of passage include economic obligations such as opening a bank account, and community obligations such as taking gifts to senior citizens during Kwanzaa, an African American holiday that celebrates seven principles of family, friends, and communities. At the end of the year there is a rites of passage ceremony.

Detroit Public Schools. (1991, January). *Male academy implementation document.* Detroit: Author.

Hare, N., & Hare, J. (1985). *Bringing the black boy to manhood: The Passage.* San Francisco: The Black Think Tank.

Woodward Elementary School and Michigan State University -
"My Brothers Keeper" Program
Detroit, MI

Clifford Watson
Woodward Elementary School
2900 Wreford
Detroit, MI 48208
313/494-2501

Geneva Smitherman
Department of English
221 Morrill Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1936
517/353-9252 or 517/336-1000

The goal of this program is to increase the educational self-esteem primarily of male elementary students, and to set them on a path to college at a young age.

Primarily male fourth and fifth graders at Woodward are mentored by African American students at Michigan State University (MSU). The elementary students also make several trips to the MSU campus, go on campus tours, attend college classes with their mentors, and are generally introduced to college life. Some tutoring is also provided, with an emphasis on Afrocentric cultural awareness.

The Children of the Sun - Tampa Urban League

Garry Mendez, Jr.
The National TRUST for the
Development of African American Men
908 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, DC
202/543-2407

Wally Shabazz, TRUST Director
The Greater Tampa Urban League
Tampa, FL
813/229-8117

The Greater Tampa Urban League created a 14-week afterschool program called The Children of the Sun School. The School's curriculum is based on addressing five risk factors among African American males: crime and delinquency, health and longevity, education, economic development, and family and community life. Children of the Sun works closely with the public schools, is considered a support for the public schools, and is currently located in a community center as well as in two Tampa public schools.

The Children of the Sun School serves African American youth from 10- to 18-years-old with a four-part intervention. The first is a lecture by an African American physician, which focuses on the promotion of health and prevention of disease, and includes physical examinations. The second, the actual 14-week course, reinforces health issues while focusing on African American culture, heritage, history, and values. Three values are stressed: 1) respect—for self, family, elders, and community; 2) responsibility—to self, family, sexuality, family and community; and 3) self-development—in the areas of education, health, economic development, and family life.

The third intervention occurs at the end of the 14 weeks, when the graduates of The Children of the Sun School move into a year-long "rites of passage" program, which has been partly modeled on the work of Nathan Hare; this program has several components, including escorting nurses who make home visits, keeping a journal of everything they eat for a week, and participating in a final ceremony in which the boy becomes a young man. Finally, the fourth intervention is linking the African American youth with a mentor.

Tampa Urban League TRUST. (1990). *The TRUST Program*. Tampa: Author.

The HAWK Project - Grant Union High School
Sacramento, CA

Wade Nobles, Executive Director
The Institute for the Advanced
Study of Black Family, Life and Culture
Oakland, CA
415/836-3245

Richard Owens, Principal
Grant Union High School
Sacramento, CA
916/921-3757

"The major problem of our young black men is self-esteem," says Richard Owens, principal of Grant Union High School. The high school is 39 percent black, 24 percent Hispanic, 18 percent Asian, and 18 percent white. Owens argues that the most effective means of raising the self-esteem of his African American students is through giving them a knowledge of their history and culture. "Until this year, when we had multicultural days, the Hispanics and Asians knew what to wear and do, but the African American students didn't know they had anything to celebrate."

The HAWK program was initiated at Grant Union High School in the fall of 1988, with the primary goal of increasing male responsibility in teenage pregnancy. Owens contracted with Wade Nobles, creator of HAWK, because the program uses a mix of African and African American history and African rituals to develop "competent, confident and conscious African American men," and can serve to prevent problems with drugs, gangs, low aspirations, or academic failure equally well.

At Grant Union, students begin the HAWK program in the ninth grade and continue to be enrolled in it through the twelfth grade. Currently, there are about 100 ninth through twelfth graders in HAWK. The participants attend two pull-out classes as well as two afterschool classes each month. (This current mix of pull-out and afterschool is a compromise, according to Owens, since many students come to school in buses and it was hard to get good attendance after school. At the same time, because of the negative experience of stereotyping in Chapter 1 pull-outs, as well as teachers' resentment at having students taken out of their classes, Owens was reluctant to rely entirely on pull-out programs.)

The HAWK program attempts to develop in each young man "1) something which he does exceptionally well (competence); 2) a belief that whatever the task, he can be successful at it (confidence); and 3) an awareness of the historical greatness of African and African-American men and their personal responsibility to the future continuation of that greatness (consciousness)." The HAWK program also uses Afrocentric cultural precepts and principles in order to guide the conduct of the young men in the program. Finally, there is a community service component—for example, HAWK participants do projects with senior citizens, whose secondary benefits is to increase their bonding to the community.

Data from the Sacramento program show that after one semester 55 percent of the youths had improved their GPAs, and that, while 82 percent of the students were performing below their ability in the first semester, this percentage had declined to 33 percent in the second semester (Nobles, 1988).

Nobles, W.W. (1989, July 25). *The HAWK Federation and the development of black adolescent males: Toward a solution to the crises of America's young black men.* Testimony before the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, Congressional Hearings on America's Young Black Men: Isolated and Troubled.

A&M College - Black Male College Explorers Program
Tallahassee, FL

Tommy Mitchell
Black Male College Explorers Program
A&M College
Tallahassee, FL
904/599-3483

The problem to be attacked by the Black Male College Explorers program (BMCEP) is the low rate of college attendance among black males and their high post-secondary dropout rate relative to other groups of students.

The Black Male College Explorers Program, sponsored by A&M College, Florida's only public black post-secondary institution, is scheduled to begin in 1991. The program's message for black male students is "if you get your act together, we will get you into college and keep you there," according to Tommy Mitchell, who heads it. The BMCEP is aimed at students in the ninth through twelfth grades, but students begin in the eighth grade so that students can have four to five years of a six-week summer intervention program before college entrance. Due to a decrease in funding, the plan to serve 300-400 youth has been severely scaled down, and the program will begin with 25 students. The BMCEP will identify a principal, counselor, teacher, and community person to work with the students, and their progress will be monitored during the school year.

In addition to its academic curriculum, the program will focus on such cultural issues as "the ideal man," and the role of men in society, as fathers, and as the head of the family.

A Curriculum for Adolescent Fathers - English High School
Boston, MA

The Assumption of the Comprehensive School Age Parenting Program (CSAPP) in English High School is that black students need help both in becoming more sexually responsible and in making more effective decisions, and that education (especially when taught by other African American males) can be an effective tool.

The CSAPP is directed at African American males, and the counselors in the program are African American. The 15-session course is offered for credit, and students can enroll through the normal procedures. Among the areas addressed in the course are: effective social and environmental living; relationships

with a significant other/partner; coping with stress; male responsibility and parenting; facilitating positive child health and development; and the importance of personal development.

The course offers help with feelings, peer support, mentoring and employment.

Battle, S. (1988-89). African-American male responsibility in teenage pregnancy: The role of education. *The Urban League Review, 12* (1&2), 71-81.

Sander, J. (1986, May). *Working with teenage fathers: A handbook for program development.* New York: Bank Street College of Education and Ford Foundation.

Ujamaa Institute - Medgar Evers College
Brooklyn, NY

Basir Mchawi
New York City Board of Education
Brooklyn, NY
718/935-3904

The idea for the Ujamaa Institute arose out of the troubles faced particularly by single parent black and Hispanic families and their male children. Ujamaa means family in Swahili, and the high school will place a strong emphasis on family life and values.

Scheduled to open in September 1991, the Ujamaa Institute will be an experimental high school run collaboratively by the New York City Board of Education and Medgar Evers College, and will be located at Medgar Evers in Brooklyn. Open to both sexes and all races, the Institute will draw a heterogeneous mix of students from all over the City. In addition to state-required courses, emphasizing mathematics and science, the Institute will offer a multicultural curriculum stressing the history and culture of African Americans and including such particularly black cultural manifestations as jazz. Family values and values clarification will also be a theme across the curriculum.

To prevent tracking with a heterogeneous student population, cooperative learning will be used. Finally, the plan is to restructure the school day, possibly into two major blocks, one for the humanities and one for math and science, so that more time will be available for deep and wide-ranging discussions.

Berger, J. (1991, January 10). New York Board backs school for minority men. *The New York Times*, p.A1, B7.

Bradley, A. (1991, January 15). New York City Board backs new school geared toward black and Hispanic males. *Education Week*, p.5.

Concerned Black Men, Inc. - Project 2000
Washington, DC

Broderick D. Johnson, President
Concerned Black Men, Inc.
1300 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 1
Washington, DC 20001

Project 2000 is named after the class of the year 2000—students, who entered the third grade in 1990-91. Its premise is that young African American males need male models of success if they are to avoid reproducing the negative images all around them. Concerned Black Men, Inc., implemented Project 2000 when these students were in first grade, and has pledged to follow them through high school graduation.

Project 2000 includes mentoring, seminars on such topics as self-development and self-esteem, and projects designed to enhance students' self-esteem. An Efficacy Project trains volunteers to serve as tutors, advisors, and mentors. The group has an annual Youth Recognition Awards Banquet, a Martin Luther King, Jr., Oratory Contest, and an African American History Bee. Project 2000 is currently also running an adopt-a-school project in Washington, DC.

Although the mentoring component of the project has been discontinued because of lack of resources, Project 2000 has served as a model for programs in both Dade County and Baltimore.

Toussaint Institute Fund
New York, NY

Gail Foster, Director
Toussaint Institute Fund, Inc.
1851 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Blvd., Suite 20
New York, NY 10026
212/678-0787

The assumption behind the Toussaint Institute Fund is that many African American boys are unruly, poor students in public school because the general tone of the school, including its low expectations for them, encourages such behavior.

Founded by Gail Foster in 1988, the Toussaint Institute Fund seeks out African American, low-income, elementary school boys who are experiencing repeated failure in public schools, and provides them with the 90 percent of the funds necessary to attend historically Black Independent Schools.

In September 1990 the first formal research project was initiated to assess the progress of the boys placed in these black independent schools.

The Toussaint Institute Fund. (1990). *Annual Report*, New York: Author.

District and State Proposals for School-Based Projects

At the same time as local schools and organizations around the country have been initiating programs for African American males in particular neighborhoods, several school districts, and even one state, have issued comprehensive documents analyzing the conditions of African American boys and youth and offering strategies for improving schools to meet their needs. Some of these plans are quite comprehensive, both in their analyses of the problem and in their proposals for remediation. Proposals include more equitable school management practices, extending the school day and year, greater support to families, and better coordination with housing and human services. However, most of the plans also repeat some of the specific, male-oriented and Afrocentric strategies employed by local groups.

Increasing the Achievement of Black Male Students: The Portland, Oregon, Public Schools Approach

The educational program advocated by the Staff Desegregation Coordinating Committee Task Force is an attempt to respond to the general plight of black males (including underachievement, high dropout rates, and untenable rates of unemployment, imprisonment, and suicide). While recognizing that schools with access to youngsters only between seven-thirty and three o'clock can't control poverty or family disrepair, the Task Force has sought to intervene in "the maldistribution of life chances" by a plan for a comprehensive school program that operates on both academic and social levels.

Ron Edmond's "effective schooling" is suggested as a primary strategy, since it includes such useful components as high expectations, a clear school mission, a positive commitment to student achievement, and appropriate standards of behavior. It is to be supplemented by a focus on "mastery learning," which closely monitors students' progress and structures success to reinforce a sense of students' self-worth.

The proposed educational program also attempts to battle the psychological effects of poverty and racism with several initiatives: a multiethnic curriculum; a formally supervised ritual developed by Nathan Hare (The Passage) to help initiate boys into manhood; African American male mentors; and empowerment of the home and community through accountability and involvement in the school's agenda.

Finally, the program advocates creating special programs to minimize such "distracting influences" as drugs, inappropriate peer groups, and staff insensitivity to the problems and strengths of African American males.

Green, R.L., Franklin,C., & Hammond, N.J. (1988). *Increasing the achievement of black male students: The Portland, Oregon, Public Schools approach.* Report to Dr. Mathew Prophet, from the Staff Desegregation Coordinating Committee Task Force. Portland, OR: Portland Public Schools.

Black Male Achievement - Prince George's County Public Schools
Prince George's County, MD

While alluding to the general problems of black males in the larger society, the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Black Male Achievement in Prince George's County focuses on specific problems affecting black males in the County's public schools. Prince George's County is currently 50 percent black, and its school population is 65 percent black. First and most importantly, according to the Committee, the Prince George's County school system is underfunded compared to neighboring Maryland districts, and there are inequities within the county, with magnet schools and Milliken II schools (which receive extra funds as a remedy for racial extreme isolation) receiving more than all other schools that serve the majority of the students. Second, there is a severe lack of multicultural curricula, instructional materials, and library books in the school system. Third, male African American role models are rare among the school system's teachers (six percent) and absent in the highest levels of administrative staff. (African American males and females comprise a third of all secretaries, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and other support staff.) Finally, while African American male students are grossly underrepresented in advanced academic groups and courses, they comprise 47 percent of all students receiving special education services.

Not surprisingly, the Superintendent's Advisory Committee advises that all schools should be given the level of resources now available in the Milliken II schools, and that the allocation for books and materials should be significantly increased. There should be a strong core academic curriculum, a majority of all students should have access to and succeed in advanced levels of this curriculum, and the Eurocentric curriculum should be replaced with one that is multicultural.

In line with a more multicultural curriculum, the Committee suggests that more African American teachers, counselors, and administrators be recruited, hired, and retained, so that their numbers are commensurate with the black presence in the county's population; and that special efforts be made to increase the presence of African American male teachers in the classroom.

The Committee also recommends several changes in the mechanics of school placement. An accountability system, which encompasses broader indices of student progress and performance so that the schools can go beyond the identification of problems to selecting remedies, is also suggested.

The Superintendent's Advisory Committee recommends a number of changes in the schools' ties with the outside world, particularly with families, the world of work, and the community. These include offering increased support to families, especially those in economically disadvantaged communities, by creating more full-day kindergarten and extended-day programs, restoring extracurricular

activities in the middle school, and working with other county agencies to coordinate health, housing, employment, and other services. At the same time, ties between work and school should be strengthened by providing students with mentors and internships. And the relationship between the schools and the community should be strengthened through such strategies as improving the school board election process and creating a greater connection to school issues in neighborhood churches and housing developments as well as among African American fraternal, professional, and volunteer organizations.

Curry, W.K. (1990, September). *Black male achievement: From peril to promise.* Report of the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Black Male Achievement. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools.

Milwaukee Public Schools - A Dream Deferred

The African American Male Task Force of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) looked closely at local data, information from other public schools, and research on African American males generally, in order to arrive at its analysis of the current problems and make recommendations for change. Among the most critical local facts are: a suspension rate for black students that is third among cities in the nation (50 percent of the students suspended are African American males), and an extremely low achievement rate among black males in the MPS (only 17 percent have a cumulative grade point average between 2.0 and 3.0 and only two percent have a cumulative grade point average between 3.0 and 4.0).

To increase the number of at-risk students who remain in the MPS system, and to improve the academic achievement levels of all African American males, the Task Force offers both short-term and long-term recommendations. Recommendations to be implemented immediately are divided into three areas: district policy, staff development, and structural variations.

According to the Task Force, any district policy "must embody the notion that all students can learn at increasingly high levels." There should be more flexible structuring of time for reading and other academic study. Students should be provided with access to more high quality afterschool, summer and Saturday programs. And homework should be developed to enhance both student and parent accountability.

To make the curriculum respond more effectively to student diversity, it should be changed to include more information on and appreciation of African American and other cultures. At the same time, a "Gender Socialization Course" should be required of all students to help them establish gender identity in a safe environment.

To increase district staff's ability to work with children of diverse backgrounds, the Task Force also recommends that the number of African American (especially male) teachers be increased; that instructional modes be implemented to accommodate student differences; and that there be greater staff involvement with parents. To facilitate these changes, all staff should be required

to participate in inservice courses on African American history and culture, as well as on racism and its negative impact on all Americans; and a school with 90 percent or more black students should have special professional development for its teachers.

Finally, the Task Force recommends an African American male immersion academy, to be established at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels. Though open to all students, this academy would emphasize educating African American males with an Afro-centered Immersion Specialty Program.

The long-term recommendations of the Task Force include a range of items, from restructuring the schools, to creating alternative discipline programs, and providing adequate resources to implement the proposal.

African American Male Task Force, Milwaukee Public Schools. (1990, May). *Educating African American males: A dream deferred.* Milwaukee: Author.

Johnson, D. (1990, September 30). Milwaukee creating 2 schools just for black boys. *The New York Times*, p. A1, 26.

Lawton, M. (1990, October 10). Two schools aimed for black males set in Milwaukee. *Education Week*, p.1, 12.

Educating Black Male Youth - The New Orleans Public Schools

The city of New Orleans, like other major metropolitan areas, is experiencing a crisis in school dropout rates as well as college nonenrollment and unemployment among black males, according to the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools. While many problems in the New Orleans community go beyond the responsibility of the school, the Committee reaffirmed that "education is still the primary key to improving the self-concept, self-esteem, academic ability and economic opportunities of these men."

The Committee is divided into four subcommittees: Expectations, School Structure Variations, Community Influences and Perceptions, and Parental Responsibilities, each of which offers its own recommendations.

The Subcommittee on Expectations recommends programs, courses, and other forums that discourage dropping out by pointing to the tangible and intangible effects of staying in school; focus on job, parenting, and family life skills; develop better communication between students and teachers; and teach social behaviors and etiquette, good sportsmanship, and coping skills.

The Subcommittee on School Structure Variations recommends a number of structural changes, from requiring pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs for all children to reducing the pupil-teacher ratio at all grade levels. Several recommendations focus specifically on improvements aimed at African American male students. These include: hiring more male elementary teachers, especially in grades K-3; using counselors and peer counseling in junior and senior high school

to de-emphasize the negative impact of peer pressure on black males' academic performance; and requiring male students to participate in extracurricular activities that are not related to athletics. This Subcommittee also recommends piloting such programs as an all-male magnet, a school requiring uniforms, a year-round program, and before- and afterschool use of buildings.

Among the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Community Influences and Perceptions are: greater support from the business community, including release time for parents to attend school meetings and rewards and incentives to the children of their employees to have good attendance and high grades; special outreach to parents (especially teenage parents, and parents of boys) to show them the value of education, improve school-home communication, and to help parents become active political allies of schools.

To improve schooling specifically for African American male students, this Subcommittee recommends greater volunteerism by various segments of the subcommunity, especially black males; and a course on black history and culture, including the contributions of black Americans to this country.

The Subcommittee on Parental Responsibilities offers a wide variety of concrete suggestions for making parents more aware of the importance of "teaching their boys the value of an education," for enhancing teachers' connections with parents, and for giving parents needed support to do such tasks as monitoring their children and helping them with homework. The Subcommittee also recommends that businesses provide rewards and incentives to the children of their employees who maintain above average grades, attend school daily, and participate in extra-curricular activities.

Garibaldi, A.M. (1988). *Educating black male youth: A moral and civic imperative.* New Orleans: Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools.

Ohio's African-American Males: A Call to Action

The Education Subcommittee of the Governor of Ohio's Commission on Disadvantaged Black Males begins its report by citing the high dropout and low graduation rates, low scores on standardized tests, heavy placement in special education and slow learning classes, and the high rates of suspension and expulsion among African American males. At the same time, the Subcommittee points out that the percentage of African American teachers is only half as great as the percentage of African American students. Finally, the Subcommittee asserts that there is a causal connection between the school failure of black males and their difficulties in the larger society, in fact, that "African American males' failure in school is the leading cause for most, if not all, of the other problems they face in society."

The Subcommittee recommendations focus on four areas of change: decreasing the public school failure of black males through lowering dropout rates, changing the attitudes of educators toward African American students, setting standards for academic achievement, and realigning vocational education.

To lower dropout rates, the Subcommittee recommends a variety of strategies. These include: replacing out-of-school suspensions with in-school suspensions and Saturday schools; providing full funding to preschool and Head Start programs; replacing ability groupings with individual education plans; assessing all school policies for their effects on dropout rates; and making academic achievement a top priority for African American male youth. A major thrust in shifting the academic priorities of this population is to use the parent/teacher organizations in each school for a variety of monitoring and support tasks, including assistance in identifying African American teachers and helping to tutor black male students.

The Subcommittee follows a two-pronged thrust in its approach to the problem of African American male attitudes toward education. On the one hand, the Subcommittee addresses the need for changing the attitudes of educators, who often create "mistaken messages"; on the other, it pinpoints the need for changing the image of African Americans in the school, and, in turn, the way that African American students see themselves. Strategies include changes both in and outside the school. Inside the school, a multicultural curriculum should be used; and African American role models should be increased, particularly by recruiting and retaining African Americans in the roles of teachers, professors, and administrators. Equally important, African American males should be called upon in defining educational problems and developing the solutions. Finally, all teachers should be helped to understand factors outside the school that may affect student behavior. And all school personnel should be required to participate in human relations training.

The school's relationship to the world outside should also be strengthened. Partnerships between private industry and schools should be encouraged to provide scholarships for African American males. Parent training programs should be created to increase parental efficacy. And collaborative efforts between the schools and social service agencies should be developed.

In the area of academic achievement, the Subcommittee notes that the major concerns are to set standards, while not falling prey to the biases and other negative effects of massive testing programs. Thus, the Subcommittee recommends that the state ensure basic skill mastery by the fourth grade for African American male students; move all remedial programs for disadvantaged students to the end of the school day and the summer; develop programs that raise self-esteem and pride in African American male students; develop student advocate teams to work with students and parents on individual education plans; and adopt the goals and strategies of the Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990, prepared by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Attempting a balanced view toward vocational education, the Subcommittee seeks to address the problems of low college enrollment among African American males, at the same time as it seeks to increase vocational education for these students. Since the provision of vocational education too easily leads to a tracking system, the Subcommittee argues students should be allowed to pursue both paths during high school, in order to keep their vocational and college plans open.

Governor's Commission on Socially Disadvantaged Black Males. (1990, June). *Ohio's African-American males: A call to action.* Vol. Two: Education, health, employment and criminal justice. Columbus: The Ohio Office of Black Affairs.

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